

Cross And Multi-Cultural Controversy Issues in The Field of Sports Psychology

Jeffrey Kang

St. Paul's School, the United States

Abstract

This paper reviews past cross-cultural research in sports psychology and discusses frequently used terms in the field, research frameworks, the goals of research, methodological concerns, implications for practice and future research directions. Regarding terminology, there are differences in the terms “culture,” “race,” and “ethnicity.” Between the two frameworks of cross-cultural studies in sport, the individualism-collectivism framework has been questioned, while the eco-culturalism approach has not been used extensively. The basic goals of research in cross-cultural psychology are to determine the similarities and differences of human behaviors in different cultural contexts and to determine human behaviors common to most cultural groups. Methodological concerns for cross-cultural research center on the issue of equivalence in measurements and psychological constructs when applied to people of different cultural backgrounds. A four-stage conceptual framework is proposed to address these methodological issues. Research should focus on areas that have cross-cultural underpinnings (e.g. coach leadership, team cohesion, motivational climates) and on cross-indigenous comparisons in different areas of sport psychology. Knowing the similarities and differences in sporting behaviors among cultural groups will lead to an understanding of relationships and group dynamics in sports. This knowledge will increase sport psychology practitioners' sensitivity and effectiveness in their consultation work with athletes and coaches who come from different cultural backgrounds. The same knowledge can also increase sport administrators' and coaches' awareness as they make policy decisions regarding the training and long-term welfare of athletes.

Keywords: athletic performance, behavior, ethnic differences, human behavior, psychological factors